



Cuba 1987

Hansai 1997

Mon amour —

Pour ton journal cubain,
ton univers intérieur au lieu du
cosmos et, je l'espère, un ou
deux poèmes.

Avec toute ma passion
et toute mon affection,

Arlette

le 24 mai 1987

May 28, 1987 Cuba
Thursday 8³⁰ am

Havana

I was about to begin these notes yesterday morning when my phone rang. A Cuban playwright, Freddy Atilis, was in the lobby, assigned to me by the ITI here. A gaunt, rather shy fellow who wanted to know my wishes so that he could attend to them. I returned to my hotel room (# 1231) a little after 1 am, having had a rich + enjoyable day.

I was going to begin yesterday's notes by saying that this diary should begin with the letter I wrote Atilis the morning before, i.e. Tuesday morning, in which I recounted my experiences on the flight (Cubana # 481) - delayed by

21 hours - and on arrival in Cuba.
The fortuitous encounter with the little old
Cuban lady who turned out to be a
famous (+ evidently under celebrated) playwright
+ with Estella Bravo, the American-bred-
-Cuban, a documentary film maker married
to a Cuban professor of medicine (she was
just returning from some do on "truth + the
news" at the Ontario Art Gallery which
Bill Meers of the CBC, displaying the
usual standard of Canadian political
acumen, opened by saying something
like: "In Russia there is a newspaper
called 'Pravda', which means 'truth', +
another which is called 'Izvestia' which
means 'news' — + neither of them ever
contain either truth or news." At least,
that's how Estella related the words,
with chagrin). My letter also made men-
tion of my first impressions - Cuba

20 years later — the ubiquitous evidence of construction (especially housing), the absence of any sense of violence + threat in the streets at night (I took a long walk the night of my arrival, at first along the sea + then through dimly-lit streets), but also the irritation of the Latinamerican lack of organization.

On my way to meeting the letter arrived 11 am Tuesday morning. I met up with Anton Wagner in the lobby. I had been told he had planned to arrive here on Sunday, but on Monday + Tuesday morning no one (at the Can. Embassy or the ITI) knew whether he had (+ they had asked me to look out for him). So there he was, all tanned + beaming, though a little lost. No one had met him at the airport either, + without speaking a word of Spanish

he had found it difficult to discover the hotel in which he was booked (he had assumed it was a cheaper hotel - the Capri, but it turned out to be the Havana Libre). Anyway, he had a little too much rum on Monday (7 hours), but when I decided to go to the beach, he joined me. I had made contact with one Cesar at the ITI who was going to call me back right away to let me know my "program". After not hearing from him for two hours, I decided to write my letter to A. + go to the beach. So Anton + I engaged a taxi which took us to La Playa de Santa Maria, about 30 km away, for US \$ 8.50.

On the way I chatted with the taxi driver + learnt that he had 5 children, lived in an apartment by the sea for which he pays 10 pesos (approx. \$9.- us) a month + which he will eventually own.

He told me he has 3 "babes" + 2 girls
(one of which is married) between the ages of
10 + 26, who are all going to school or
studying, + that they can do so because all
education is free; that they don't have to
shoe-shine or pimp or prostitute themselves.
He was eloquent, in a simple way, about
the new life the Revolution had brought
to Cuba — free medication, free education,
equality of men + women, literacy for all,
no drugs or prostitution, disappearance of racism.
He admitted that there was always a bad
egg or two, but he was enthusiastic about
what is happening in Cuba because every-
body — despite certain material shortages, can
enjoy a good life.

Anton + I Spent 3 hours at the
beach — a long sandy beach with few
people. The ocean was heavenly, reflecting
the play of the clouds in many hues
of blue + green. The water was warm

+ Caressed the skin with velvet gloves. There was a strong wind from the sea which produced enjoyable waves + cooled us down - but, alas, it also deceived us about the intensity of the sun (especially between 1 + 4 pm!), so that yesterday I too realized I had had too much sun, my skin turning red (but not, fortunately, blistering), + Anton felt definitely sick. We had ordered the taxi for 4 pm to pick us up + return us to the city. The driver, with whom we had become quite friendly on the way out, stopped for us at the "Castilio de Morro" from where one has a fine view of the magnificent bay around which Havana is built. A picture to make the heart take wing! We then made a detour through the old part of the city, along the Paseo del Prado, + I realized there is a good deal of the old colonial Havana which is being restored. I plan to spend an afternoon there.

We returned to the Havana Hotel about

5pm. I changed rooms from the 6th to the 12th floor in order to get a little further away from the street noise + to have a better view of the sea. The view from the hotel room is indeed magnificent - the picturesque old city with its palatial domes + spires to the right, the swell + sweep of the bay, + the glittering ocean rolled out over the edge of the horizon. Mornings I keep the curtains closed because the room faces northeast + the sun would make life intolerable (air-conditioning being more of a dream than a reality in this hotel), but in the afternoon the sun is on the other side of the building + a strong, fresh breeze blows in from the sea which, with the glass doors wide open (as out on the large balcony) makes life ecstasy!

There was time only to effect the room change + to have dinner (a routine

on which I want to comment later) before
Anton + I were off to the Teatro Nacional
to see a performance of "Molinos de Viento"
In the meantime we had met up with
two ITI delegates from Australia (Tom +
Alison), + the four of us hired a taxi
which took us the 3 km (approx.) to the
theatre where I was to be met by a rep.
from the Cuban ITI. No one was there
to meet me, + it took some effort to
locate the president of the Cuban ITI (who
claimed he'd been looking for me all
day) to get a couple of good seats for
Anton + myself.

The play was a delight because
it fulfilled so easily + energetically the old
(+ still valid) dictum that theatre (+ all
art) must at one + the same time entertain
its audiences + instruct them (though that
need not take on didactic a form as it

did in "Molinos de Viento"). The plot involves a High School where all is not as it should be. The director is content with a facade of achievement, but when 3 of the more Cantish boys steal a bunch of exam questions the teachers revolt + the Director is forced into an investigation that slowly works its way through shame + deceit to a realization that everyone is responsible for the moral (+ pedagogic) breakdown at the school, the need for cooperation in a spirit of love + for an unwavering commitment to truth. In Canada such a play would be laughed out of court as propaganda + romantic idealism. It testifies to the health + sanity (+, yes, superiority!) of Cuban Society that such a play, first of all, can be produced with such vitality, flatter fast-paced fluidity + splendid acting +, secondly, that it is received with such without enthusiasm.

by Cuban audiences. I found it a moving
play that poured oil into the flickering flame
of hope in my head for a better world
to come.

After the 2½ hour non-stop perform-
ance, which severely strained my knowledge
of Spanish, I enjoyed the ¾ hr walk
back to the hotel (without being molested
by anyone). I read a little + turned in
before 1 am

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Friday, May 29 - 8^{am}

At this time of the morning the heat is still bearable. At 10^{am}, when a group of us are going to the beach at Santa Maria, it'll be broiling, sapping one's energies. Havana is a Sweatbox during the summer months. I haven't been able to get an exact temperature reading. Estimates by Cubans I've asked range between $32^{\circ} + 37^{\circ}\text{C}$. The humidity is high, for this is the rainy season - except that no rain has fallen so far. Here too the evidence for the global changes of climate we are witnessing is not lacking.

I must get back to Wednesday morning when the Cuban ITI finally made contact with me in the form of Freddy Artiles, a playwright in his mid-fifties (I guess), author of a number of

published plays (e.g. "Dus en Dus"). He's a slim person, only slightly shorter than I, with quick dark eyes that are both shy + intelligent. Not a simple personality, I knew at once, before I found out he was married twice + now lives with a woman who has two teen-age children + is, in fact, one of the Cuban organizers of the ITI Congress. Freddy (named after a Cuban disc-jockey his mother liked!) is an introvert who is not adept in the practical aspects of life — e.g. he told me he has never driven a car, + never would, because he lacks any sense of direction or orientation. But he is proving to be an extremely useful guide to me through whom I'm gaining entrance to Cuban theatre, both physically + intellectually, by short-cuts.

On Wednesday morning we discussed what it was I wanted to get out of my Cuban visit, talked about theatres-playrights, + then went to get tickets

at the Hotel Capri. He managed to get me official status at the Theatre Festival Casan ("Obscuros") in order to facilitate entrance to the various events. He also arranged for me to go out with his company to see a performance of a Russian play in a factory ^{near} the outskirts of Habana.

Guillermo picked me up at 2:40 pm (25 mins late in Cuban style — in that respect Foeddy, as I said to an Australian friend, is "as Cuban as a Kongeroo": he is always absolutely on time, by the second!), that is Guillermo (a member of the company) came to the hotel + we took a tourist taxi which brought us to the Empresa Plásticos Habana (a plastics factory near the port) through the industrial area of the city which seems to be concentrated near the port. There were many merchant ships in the harbor + Guillermo told me, in response to questions, that the US blockade

is no longer as effective as it was (though Freddy told me later that the N.S. still use every means to sabotage Cuban trade: they put pressure on foreign companies + governments to cancel contracts they have made to sell Cuba vital materials for building or machines for agriculture etc.). There were small red flags stuck in the ground along the driveway to the "theatre" which turned out to be essentially a large Cafeteria style room, just as shabby as you might find them in a Canadian factory. There they had set up a long table + chairs, as though for a committee meeting, one short end with its back to a green wall, + around this "set" on three sides, with barely four feet of space were rows of chairs for the spectators.

As the performance didn't start till 3³⁰ pm I had a chat with the actors outside who told me they were all on salary + very happy with the work they were

getting. They also readily agreed with me that such security was a threat to their dynamics as actors, though I wasn't promoting our jungle (!) + they explained that their dynamics came from their contact with the audience. And I saw that contact in action!

The play was "El Premio" by the Soviet writer A. Guelman. And it was a Committee meeting — of the Party, concerning complaints of the workers of mismanagement + corruption in the running of a factory. The Game of Contention was the premium to be paid for fulfilment of the quota which, the foreman agreed, the workers had deserved because they had done better than their quota. He produced statistical evidence that the problems + snags were the consequence of incompetence on the part of the administrators. The play is a heated (in more ways than one) argument during which every point of view is heard + which is finally settled in favour of the workers by the tie-breaking

role of one of the managers whose original antagonism to the foreman is gradual changed + turned around. Throughout this two-hrs, non-stop debate, the factory workers (who filled the room) were so integrated with the action that they lost the sense of this being theatre: this was their situation that was being debated, + their pride + their income that was at stake. They laughed + cursed, + since the performance was without special costumes + artificial lights, in a hall with windows open (at one point a train passed + whistled so loud + long that the actors had to stop talking) so that street noises were heard throughout, + people were coming + going in the back ground, I too became unsure that this wasn't a "real" committee meeting. All of the circumstances were diametrically opposed to the Conger's theatre to which I am accustomed, + yet it worked! I'll never forget the kitchen workers (there was a

kitchen at one end of the room) using every opportunity in between Waking, to stand on the doorway + Watch the performance with rapt attention. The audience was absorbed from beginning to end + gave the actors a standing ovation. It is occasions like this that make me realize how profoundly changed this Society is, + whatever the drawbacks of Cuban Socialism are, it is a change for the better for the majority of Cubans.

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Saturday, May 30 — 8^{am}

Counts are definitely getting ahead of me. I'm going to have to shorten these notes, because I'm already 3 days behind — one more day + the point is lost, i.e. to register immediate impressions.

I forgot to mention a brief luncheon at "La Torre" a Restaurant at the top of the highest building in Havana (quite close to the hotel), to which I'll Sinclair, the Cultural Attache of the Can. Embassy treated Anton + I. Alas, Anton was so poorly (from the sun, he thought) that he ate little, but I enjoyed a plate of cama-rones + an ensalada mixta. I'll is a jolly person, a little heavily built, but full of enthusiasm for the arts. We had a lively discussion + I gleaned some information from her 8 months in Cuba. But time was short since I had agreed to

to meet Guillermo at the hotel to go to
see "El Premio".

In the evening I went to see an
anniversary production of Maria Antonia
by Eugenio H. Espinosa. An interesting play
whose "Carmen" plot was interwoven with
the mystical - superstitious beliefs + practices of the
past of certain African people of this land.
(Actually the Ymaka (?) people, the language of
Wole Soyinka whose works have just been
published in Spanish + who came to launch
his book with a speech at 6 pm on
Thursday) The mythic dimension is what
makes this play come alive, + the director
had wisely emphasized these elements in
the set + in the impressive choreography of
several dances + chants. The foreground plot
of the passionate beautiful negress who poisons
her lover for infidelity + is then stabbed
to death by another lover for the same
reason, is thin, + it wasn't helped by

the fact that the parts were played by the same actors who played them in the premiere production 20 years ago. Two decades tend to soften the contours of passion — to say nothing of the contours of bodies, in this case particularly that of the leading actress who had at least one superfluous pound of flesh to show for every year that had passed since the original production. The theatre is not the place for homage productions. —

Thursday began as usual with notes, picking up tickets at the Capri. At 10am Freddy picked me up for a tour of Old Havana. I didn't realize so much of Colonial Havana had survived, + the Cubans are extremely busy trying to restore some of it. Many buildings are already in fine shape, reflecting the wealth of those days. There are cobble streets, lovely patios, balustraded balconies (in stone + iron), + charming

plazas — like the Plaza de Armas where
Cuba's publishers have a fine building of
Colonial splendor. Alas, all the museums
were closed until 2³⁰ pm + by then we
were back at the hotel. But I want to
remember two trees which I learnt are
peculiar to Cuba — the palma real, the
Royal palm, a very tall (60 - 100 ft?) palm
with a completely smooth bark that barely
shows the sections of growth + a graceful
thickening in the middle that tapers off in
both directions like an Arabic column; +
the wide-branched Seiba tree, for which Freddy
knows no English term, a fine specimen of
which represents a third generation outside the
Templeta, the place where the first Catholic
Mass was read by the Spaniards. We
walked along the water so that I could
get a clear visual impression of the
splendid (+ very busy) Barrios which ex-
tends into the island in the shape of a

bagpipe — a large Sack connected to the sea by a long + narrow neck guarded on each side by heavy fortifications (El Castillo del Morro on one side, El Castillo de la Punta on the other).

At 4 pm we walked to the Casa de las Americas. I should say that walking is extremely strenuous in these temperatures + in this humidity, + Freddy sweats as profusely as I do. How he manages to cope with the strong (small) cups of coffee which he needs at regular intervals I don't know. I restrict myself to water — or the occasional mojita, a rum-drink with a twig of some mint like herb in it. Had one during the morning walk in the Bodega where Hemingway used to drink it. By the way, the Cubans indulge a perfectly & my Hemingway cult. I have heard + seen his name a hundred times to sell certain drinks

+ bars (in particular "El Floridita"). I am disappointed that they should stoop to such banal tourist promotion. Even the taxi driver told me of his 92-year old friend, a fisherman who used to take Hemingway out + who inspired "The Old Man + the Sea". — The visit to the Casa de las Americas was ineffectual since the Theatre Festival people were in session + someone was holding forth about Inguay. I caught up with Isidora Aguirre who apologized profusely for not having called back the meet with me. She is beset with people + old friends, + we agreed to get together in Montreal.

At 6pm we went to attend Soyinka's book launching. He is an intelligent person who handles himself well under questioning. Understandably he has a high opinion of African traditions, + an extremely sceptical one of those of the former white colonial masters. I must

make a point of reading his plays carefully to see if I can get access to these African traditions. I must not allow myself to be put off by his vanity or his tendency to pontificate. The public makes it extremely difficult to wear the Nobel laurels with grace.

At 9 pm Freddy + I went to see a play at the "Teatro Nacional" — "El Gato de Climata ..." — not a play as much as a romp about the anomalies + mis-managements in a Socialist sugar factory. The audience enjoyed themselves hugely, but it was shallow + silly, + after a 1/2 hr I lost interest. Freddy felt the same way. So we left at intermission. I caught a Congress bus back to the hotel + managed, for once, to get to bed (but not to sleep) before midnight.

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Saturday 11^{am}

I am back from the Palacio de las Convenciones where I went to register.

I missed the bus, but got a lift from Ricardo Garal who had Ignacio Fontón in the car. Ricardo is the director of the puppet theatre where I saw El Caballito Trovadorito yesterday which Ignacio had rewritten from a Russian original by P. Ershov. I liked the production a lot. It combined shadow puppets with rod puppets + was well-paced + imaginatively designed. Simple means were used to good effect — for instance, three strips of some white, semitransparent material, were raised + lowered horizontally to give a plastic sensation of a sea in motion (on which a whale was rocked). But I thought the play patronized children by stripping the story to the barest minimum necessary to tell of the adventures of the little boy. Symbolical figures appear (like the princess

of the Moon), but their essential relation
to the story is left in limbo — so that one
feels if they'd been something else (i.e. if
the princess had instead been a prince from
Mars) it would make little difference. Ignacio
confessed to (over-)simplifying the story + said
how difficult it was to write a play to
appeal to children of different ages. =
Freddy is downstairs in the lobby + we're
off on another day's adventures. =

x

P.S. I mentioned Innocent as an example of
such a play. It was only then that they
learned I was the author of Innocent —
whereupon they virtually exploded with
enthusiasm + admiration, pumping my hand
ecstatically. I had no idea they even knew
the play. Now I learnt they had already
translated it from the French translation! They
are planning a production + we're to meet
about it tomorrow. x

Sunday, May 31, 9am

The Congress begins tonight + casts its shadow well ahead. I was at breakfast just after 7am (the time the restaurant opens), but as I was leaving David Levine from N.Y. came + engaged me in an informational session. He has a curious status with the Playwrights Committee. Since we have neither the right nor any need to appoint a "legal adviser." He owns the position more to the nepotistic machinations of certain Committee members (Haim, Heller + Siro) than to any real contribution he has made to the work of the Committee. — David is a "nice" chap, but his attitudes are those of the wealthy Jewish New York lawyer which he is, + we were into a fight quickly when he pointed out how different Cuba was under Batista, how much more splendid this (Heller's) hotel was, + the streets in good repair, + goods in the shops. I put him in his place

by pointing out that many of these farms
were not to be laid at the doorstep of
Socialism but of the capitalism of his
country which has done everything to break
Cuba economically. "What else do you ex-
pect us to do?" he replied. "They're the
enemy." To which I replied that Cubans
were not the enemy of Americans, but
only of the privileged + the exploiters who are
responsible for so much suffering in South
America. In any case, the facade of Socialism
may be in need of repairs - I agreed -
but the reality is that the US has much
more illiteracy, ill health + poverty, even re-
latively speaking, than Cuba. - Anyway
I didn't get away till 9am + at 10am
I have meeting with Ex Com. So I
must rush these notes.

Back to Friday. I already recorded my
impressions of "El Caballito Torcadito", the
puppet play I went to see at 3pm. In

the morning I went to the beach with
Alysson Lyssa (Australia) + Joene Lyte (DDR),
an older lady who was effusively grateful
that we took her. We only stayed a couple
of hours + I was protected by Alysson's
"12+" Suntan lotion. Gorgeous weather -
even more gorgeous waves. We were best
by Cubans who wanted to practice their
English (so they said), but managed to
talk amongst ourselves too, exchanging ex-
periences + views on Cuba + Socialism.
Somehow A. asked if I had ever written
a book in German, + when I mentioned
KANADA, some people near us (I thought
they were just fasting themselves) got
up to congratulate me on the book.
They were Austrians who had read it
+ thought it excellent. Writing in Canada
may be like throwing harpoons into
a snow bank, but they seem to pass
through - as through a block hole -
+ come out the other side into the rest

of the world + at least be taken note of. —

In the evening Freddy took me to see
(at my suggestion : F. thinks I have ESP
because whenever I choose something it's
good + when he does it's poor — the luck
of the draw, I say!) El Millonario y
La Muleta in the Casa de la Comedia,
a small open-air theatre in Habana Vieja.
What a delightful experience! A total impre-
tensions comedy of errors, written by a
19th Century Cuban woman who spent most
of her time in Spain — Gertrudis Avela-
neda — and performed with abandon in a
laughing Canibeen night! A well-paced farce.
I'm going to try + get a copy of it to
see if it can be translated. — What
was also wonderful to see was the neighbors-
hood kids (under ten) who apparently came
night after night, spellbound by the magic
of the theatre unfolding before their eyes.
Occasionally one of them runs across the set

(an open space in a patio surrounded by the audience on folding chairs). It was a liberating experience after all that Socialist drama I've seen!

Yesterday was registration time at the Palacio de Convenciones where I was taken by Ricardo G. + Ignacio G. (see yesterday's notes). Afterwards we ^(F+J) went to Freddy's place in the centre of Old Havana where he gave me a short course on contemporary Cuban drama. He lives with his common-law wife + his two teenage children in a second-floor apartment consisting of 4 or 5 narrow (but high-ceilinged) rooms with a tiny space for him to write. He is evidently quite content with his quarters (which he owns + therefore doesn't cost him anything); they are too dingy + noisy for me — but they're better than what I've seen in other Latin American countries.

Freddy told me about the six most important contemporary playwrights (including himself) at my request because he is a modest man): Abelardo Estorino, Nicolás Durr, Héctor Quiroga, Ignacio Gutiérrez + José Brene. He outlined their plays to me + I've chosen seven I want to read + from which I shall select one or two for translations. The plays are a compromise between what Freddy judges as their best work + what I judge instinctively might interest a Canadian audience. They include "El Robo de Porcena", "Ni mm Si, ni mm No", "Las Pericas", "Contigo pan y cebolla", "Llévame a la Pelota", "Santa Camelia de la Havana Vieja", "Adriana en dos Tiempos", + "El Esquema". After I've read them I'll know better. It was certainly a very informative + fruitful session.

From F's apartment we went to the art museum. A large modern cement building

that seemed to be in some disarray + even disrepair. But, after walking up a long ramp, we came to a large room marked "Arte Cubano" which contained approx. 80-100 canvases of the 19th + 20th century. Apart from Lam (who spent most of his life in Paris but died in his native Cuba in 1982) I know none of the painters. There was some very interesting work, but so few canvases by any one painter that it was impossible to judge their importance or even discern a distinctive Cuban style. European influences were ubiquitous, but there were independent spirits too. I tried in vain to buy postcards or reproductions or to find a book about Cuban art.

There was time for a rest at the hotel before dinner + another theatre performance this time of the "Banza Nacional de Cuba".

The food in the hotel is plentiful + good, but not very sophisticated. Perhaps I am spoiled by the haute cuisine of my London blum sweetheart. Still, I am adaptable + I would find no fault with the food. The Cubans are to be especially congratulated considering the difficulties they themselves have with the food supply.

Breakfast is between 7 + 10 am + offers large quantities of fresh fruit (oranges, grape fruit, pineapples, mangoes + bananas), boiled eggs or scrambled eggs with bacon or (sometimes) pancakes. In addition there is a long table with plates of cheese or sausage as well as different sweets + cakes. Orange + guava juice, American or Cuban coffee, yogurt etc. I usually eat a large, three-course breakfast because I skip lunch altogether (except for the luncheon with J.H. Sinclair). - Dinner offers the same variety of food + drinks (a bottle of water or beer is included), but a larger selection of sweet cakes. There are also large numbers of

hors d'oeuvres which include tomatoes + cucumbers, various pastos + crackers, fried bananas + plantains, frequently an assortment of pieces of fish, cheese or meat. In addition there is a hot meal, ^{usually 3 dishes to choose from} ~~choice of~~ fried fish or chicken, a meat stew, once rabbit + once calamores — with either rice or potatoes + sometimes beans. As I say, plentiful + solid.

At 8:15 pm Freddy picked me up at the hotel + we went to the National Ballet Theatre to see the Company "Danza Nacional de Cuba" in a programme of 5 pieces of which the first, which lasted almost a whole hour, was by far the best: "Lunetario" ("Stalls") in which four characters sit next to each other watching a show while the dancers interpret their different interior monologues. A fascinating piece with superb group dancing + a fine choreography. I liked the group very much — young, modern, inspired, though I didn't care much for the pieces they called "Jeminal" (an unfocused piece about plants +

flowers growing) + Mandala (about Nelson M. of course) because the choreography made no sense. "Tribute" paid tribute to Caribbean music + traditions, but I found it an unnecessary descent into the commonplace. "Metamorphosis" was excellent: it didn't have anything to do with Kafka (in spite of the quote in the program), but depicted the struggle of life towards freedom + light. There was an air of biological mysteries as well as political liberation. A thoroughly enjoyable evening that convinced Freddy that my intuition (I had chosen the program from a long list of available spectacles).

Afterwards we went La Florida, Hemingway's favorite bar to have one of his beloved daiquiris. I found it no better than any daiquiri I've had elsewhere, but I dislike such personality cults for commercial profit + I could react against it even if La Florida offered the best daiquiri in the world. — By 1 am I was back at the hotel + watched a film with William Holden till 2 am.

Tuesday 11^{am}

June 2

Since the start of the Congress Monday morning it's been impossible to get back to these notes. In fact, for me the Congress started on Sunday morning when the ITI EXCOM asked to see the Presidents of the Permanent Committees. The meeting was in a building in Old Havana + we were asked to wait as each of us was to appear before EXCOM in turn. I was angered by this high-handed attitude + began my appearance by calling EXCOM "arrogant". Soyinka apologized + tried to attribute the procedure to transportation difficulties. But I pointed out that we were all artists of the theatre inter pares + that all the presidents should meet with EXCOM at the same time so that they could hear what each one has to say.

about Committee Structures + rationales, instead
of being treated like suspects appearing at
a hearing to see if a crime has been
committed. But they didn't bridge + I
lambasted them for their Concomitant
minds. Later Several members of ExCON
(Poland, FRG, India, etc.) congratulated me on
my outspokenness. They agreed with my criticism
but declared there was no point in ~~my~~ ^{their}
protesting because Perinetti was a dictator.
Conards! In the end, they're putting their
own vested interest ahead of the common
good.

I'm not going to bother making a
note about the details of the Congress
because the administrative portion is a
bore: I can deal with it effectively,
but it doesn't exactly inspire me. I'm
a very practical person + impatient with
equivocation + circumlocution. Which
means that I can run a Committee in

a manner that produces results without im-
posing my own views. It's a matter of
cutting through the vetting + middle that
is chief product of most committees, finding
the consensus + articulating it. The result is
that I'm always asked to be on + chair com-
mittees, + although I've declared at the be-
ginning of the meeting of the Playwright
Committee that I'll not run for the
presidency of the Board again, I am being
persuaded by several members to let my
name stand for re-election. But I intend
to stand firm for 3 reasons: (1) I've
been on the Board 4 yrs + it's time
to make room for other people with
new ideas + energies (there are always
good people out there whose talents won't
develop until the incumbents move over);
(2) my health requires that I reduce my
commitments, + that means dropping this

kind of organizational involvement; (3) I definitely don't want me to run; my independence + forthrightness is too much for the mediocrities that manipulate the organization - a mafia (the Jane Bussos - Erica Ritters - Carol Belts + Eric Salntins of the world that corrode the social + intellectual fibre of any organization or society at any level!) that I'm not prepared to fight unless I have to. I'm no Don Quixote. The best way to relegate them to the adican is to produce works that celebrate the human spirit, the imagination, the joy + love that they lack! —

After the Texcom hearing on Sunday I met with Freddy to go to the Puppet Theatre of Ricardo Jara. They wanted to talk to me about Inook, to find out what I wanted to do as far as the play, how I came

to write it, + Freddy had some specific questions concerning a possible translation (one of them that caused Adelle some problems with the French translation, i.e. the gender of the son + the moon which is so unalterably the opposite of what it must be in the play — the next day, Freddy told me his wife Myra solved the problem at once for him!). The result of our 2 hour session was that the play will be translated by Freddy + that the theatre will produce it, probably early in 1988. They are hoping that I'll come in December to take part in the rehearsals. That suits me fine, since I was planning a Caribbean holiday over Christmas anyway.

Sunday eve at 7 was the official opening of the XXII. Int'l World Congress in an old Spanish Colonial Building

at the Plaza de Armas. The usual boring
speeches of a series of official, an experience
~~characterized~~ by the heat. But there were two
handsome Royal palm trees in the attractive
patio where the ceremony took place. Afterwards
— after a long + sweaty wait in the
Plaza de la Cathedral — there was a per-
formance of "Las Rumbas" — an exciting
spectacle of folk dancing + singing that
have their roots in Africa. Some of the
dances were immensely energetic, + the
naked sweaty dark-skinned bodies glisten-
ing in the colored stage-lights under
a dazy tropical ~~night~~^{sky} conjured up
tribal memories long before the dawn of
historical consciousness.

After "Las Rumbas" I took an ITibus
back to the hotel + was in bed
around midnight.

*

Tuesday Noon: I give myself another ten minutes to record a memorable experience last night (as early this morning, to be exact). In the afternoon Ignacio Jentínez took me aside + told me I was invited to a special party + show to celebrate a medal to be given to Huelo SayinRa (another one!). I immediately sensed there was something special about this invitation + decided we were going to see Fidel Castro. The discreet manner + air of the invitation as well as my guess that only Fidel could give Huelo this medal after Havana had given him the Freedom of the City the day before, gave me this idea. Well, at 8³⁰ pm a group of us were picked up in a large bus + taken to the Mella Theatre to see an agitprop piece, called "De los Días de la Guerra", performed by "El Teatro Juvenil".

It was a long combination dance + chant
that bored me because it was far too
long + monotonous — a work based on
Jose Marti's diary, (Cuba's national hero),
not the best source for a theatrical
spectacle. Afterwards I was ready to go
back to the hotel, especially as I was
beginning to develop some ariginal pain
(+ I had left my intro in the hotel
for once, because I'd been quite organized
about carrying it about with me here
in Cuba). There were many delegates
from the ITI at the performance, but the
manner in which they were treated off
confirmed my speculation + I stayed.
Soon we were admitted to the bus where
our names were checked off against a
list. By then I was sure + I was
surprised that the other people suspected
nothing. We were then taken on a criss-
cross trip through H. (like the tail of

a rabbit trying to shake a pursuing dog)
+ ended up at a large building situated
in a large landscaped garden (details were
difficult to establish in the half-dark) —
a Government reception hall where we
were all positioned for the ceremony.
And sure enough, about midnight Fidel
appeared: we stood silent while the Cuban
+ (what I took to be) the Nigerian national
anthems were played, the Minister of Culture
gave a speech, Castro presented Soyinka with
the medal, Soyinka spoke, + then the
whole party broke + milled about, the
focus being naturally Castro. Through-
out the ceremony he seemed ill
at ease + looked in various directions.
He was directly across from me (in line
with Holo who had his back to me
about halfway). He has aged more than
I have in the 20 years since I last saw

him. The face shows the strain of his particular office + responsibility as the incarnation of the hopes of so many people throughout the world. But the eyes are as clear + brilliant as ever, quickly darting between us to separate the wheat from the chaff. If he has gained a little weight + moves more heavily, his liveliness is infectious + his energy ^{seemingly} inexhaustible. He talked with us till 3³⁰ am, by which time some of us were languishing in the large leather upholstery (After going to sleep at 2 am I'd get up before 6 am, spent the morning at the ITI General Assembly where I spoke up once more, prepared the FC meeting while others were having lunch, chaired the meeting from 2 to 6, got back to the hotel in time for a rushed dinner + then was whisked off at 8³⁰ pm).

HAWAII

Feb. 2nd to 15th, 1997

*

Sunday, Feb. 2nd: Clara (+ Sara) came with us to Dorval + then dropped us off to catch our CP flight to Toronto where we were boarding our flight to Honolulu at 5:40pm. In the morning I skind in the forest at a "mild" - 5°C, hoping that I could say for once in my life that I'd skind in the morning + snow in the ocean in the evening. It almost came true, if you make allowance for the 5-hour time difference between EST + Hawaiian time. We landed in Honolulu at around 10³⁰pm after a seemingly interminable flight, at least as long in



very rough conditions (the plane shook, jolted + bounced so much that Aletti was sick + vomited!). I slept through most of it + therefore wasn't ready to go to sleep when we had settled in at the Outrigger Village Hotel before midnight. Customs + passport formalities were swift and easy, + we used a shuttle bus service for \$13 round-trip to deposit us right in front of the hotel. The room (at \$80 a night) is clean + comfortable, with two double beds, but no ocean view. We're only a hotel + a half away from the famous Waikiki beach. A, ^{despite} having had the worst of the flight, ~~walked straight to the beach~~ ^{walked with me} to the beach. Gas torches were burning that lit up the breakers as thick lines of white foam. Orion stood clearly on edge in the Southern sky, but the Big Dipper was hidden (behind Diamond Head mountain, I think). So I put my foot in the water to establish the

link to the Canadiana Snow we left behind in the morning.

Wednesday, Feb. 5, Jan (Honolulu, Outrigger Village)

Two days have passed + I haven't found time to keep any notes. The first day, Monday, might be called Orientation + Accommodation Day. We spent a good part of the day walking about the Waikiki area. The temperatures were (+ still are) around + 27°C - so our bodies had to adapt to this sudden (+ most welcome) arrival of summer ~~time~~ ^{time} for shorts + short-sleeved shirts + flappies. We had to settle our various reservations, book our flights to Kauai + Maui (at Hawaiian's Sale in Hoken Lane), + check out our bookings (hotel / condo) for these islands with our agent in L.A. (by fax + phone). And, of course, we took our first long swim in the ocean. Ah - what a delight for all the senses to be engulfed by the soft + fresh

living Salt Sea! Considering that the place is overwhelmed with tourists, there were remarkably few people swimming in the ocean. Perhaps that's because, despite the great water + the immense sand strand, the foamed under water is shallow + littered with broken coral so that one fears ~~cutting~~ cutting one's knee swimming; one has to go far out to get to deeper water. I'm told it's not like that all along Waikiki, but we won't be here long enough to find the most agreeable places to swim because we're moving on today to Kauai. — In the afternoon we took a "trolley" (an open bus) to "Aloha Towers", a shopping market in the downtown area. We found it interesting: the usual souvenirs + tourist shops, pricey but unoriginal — + again with remarkably few tourists in evidence. That's been our general impression all over Waikiki: we expected large crowds of tourists, but people seem to scatter so as not to become oppressive. The

land-back atmosphere that surrounds Waikiki here helps. — At Aloha Towers we walked into a Wyland gallery, + pretending to be collectors, allowed ourselves to be subjected to a fair sales pitch by a fat Irish girl (with a "German" name: Shellan Heferman — ~~her~~ ^{his} family dropped the "O" because the Irish were unpopular at the time) — from the story of Wyland's clump foot as a child to his ambition to finish 100 murals by the year 2011 (— he's at 68 now) + his moral crusade on behalf of whales. In fact, he seems to paint primarily whales, + though he is technically proficient he has allowed himself to become so commercialized that much of his work doesn't rise above the level of kitsch. An artist who sells out ceases to be an artist. We expressed some interest in a large print of the tail of a whale rising from the ocean on a moorlit night which aspires (a little too obviously) to symbolic significance (+ with that absolutely essential honesty of the

artist might have succeeded). At US 2,700.-
I won't a deal, though most of the value
was in the black lacquered frame which Suck-
son (+ the director, Robert) kept on polishing
presumably to convey to us their reverence
for art (spell: M-O-N-E-Y). When we left to
think it over, we were offered a discount +
a private meeting with the artist (at age 40
with still an illustrious commercial career
ahead). — The huge Cruise Orama(?)
was berthed at Aloha Towers. Impossible!
A floating city more than a ship. We
were told a passage for a 3-months was
two starts at \$150,000 + goes up to \$750,000!
Who can afford to spend that kind of
money?! We live in a world run by crooks!
— In the evening we treated ourselves to
a delicious fish meal at Scott's Restaurant
at the Aloha Towers. Shared an order of
coals cakes for Hors d'oeuvre. A ate
+ I an exquisitely delicious Alhi fish (2 1/2 half
raw) with rice. A. had a glass of wine, + I two

bottles of beer. And we shared as dessert:
more cheese cake (delicious). The bill was
unfortunately quite exquisite too: US \$ 77.00.
With the tip the meal came to \$100.-
Canadian — twice what I might have cost back
home. — Just heard on the news that
the jury in the O. J. Simpson civil suit have
found O. J. "responsible" for the murders of
which the criminal trial found him "not
guilty"! What a rare demonstration of the
basic injustice in America's justice system!
There is absolutely not a shred of doubt
in my mind that Simpson committed the
murders of which he stands accused. But
in the U.S. everything is a function of
money, even justice. Simpson was acquitted
because he could afford a team of shysters
lawyers who were able to exploit the deeply
rooted racism in U.S. society. Now he'll
pay back a few of the millions of dollars
he has made from the publicity he garnered
as a result of his murders + the TV trial
(a book, endorsements, etc.), + he goes free.

What a mockery of justice! And always at the expense of ordinary people who are duped into believing they live in a fair, just + free society. I never know what makes me more angry: their self-indulgent glibness or the cynical brutality + shamelessness of their exploiters! —

*

Friday, Feb. 7

7am - Unlilo
Shores, Kauai

Holidays for us are never times of relaxation as much as opportunities to satisfy our more exotic appetites. We haven't sat still for more than an hour since we got off the CP plane — except while I wait for A. to turn up for breakfast. So I'm far behind events in my notes. When I wrote my notes on Wednesday (is it really only 3 days ago) in Honolulu, I was about to record my impression of my visit the previous day to the Polynesian

Cultural Centre when A. came down for his "Quick 'n Easy" breakfast (2 strips of bacon, scrambled egg, toast + jam at \$2.49). That ended my note-taking for that day. And since then we've been on the move. Back to Thursday, Feb. 4 + our visit to the Polynesian Centre.

We were to be picked up at the Sheraton bus terminal at 11.30 am. There was a melee of people, different buses leaving from the same place at the same time, + much confusion. A poorly organized affair. Although I consulted the head hunchie — a woman sheathed in a long white dress with green flowers (a type of Mother Hubbard encasing the missionaries with their perverse anti-sexual obsessions foisted on the natives — several times to determine which group we belonged to in the end we were the only couple left behind + a minibus had to be summoned to catch up with one of the Sheraton buses.

(#509, driven by a jolly dark-skinned fellow who called himself Cousin Keng). After a short stop for drinks + a snack (an opportunity especially welcome by the Japanese whose main concern as tourists everywhere seems to be to go shopping + to take pictures of themselves), we arrived at the Centre a little after 1:30 pm. The Centre is dedicated to the presentation of the native cultures of the Polynesian islands + is operated by the Mormon Brigham Young University — ironically, because it was the Christian missionaries that have seen to it that nothing has remained of the native cultures of these islands — except a tepid hula-hula tourist attraction. It was unfortunate that the priests + ministers of a lachrymose + whining, breast-beating, world-negative religion such as Christianity should do everything in its power to stamp out a culture devoted to the celebration of beauty, nature + joy!



This pleading poverty to the natives has not prevented them from acquiring the land. 80% of Kauai (where I am writing this), for instance, is owned by twelve

rich families, all descendants of missionaries! If the missionaries have not entirely succeeded in eradicating the joy of life here, it is because they were defeated by the ubiquitous joy of nature. — the incredible beauty of the volcanic mountains, the lush vegetation with its glimmering + whispering palm trees, the multitude of bushes + trees flowering in all colors, the mild climate (always between 22° + 30°C !) + the ocean everywhere, teeming with dolphin, whales, turtles + myriads of colorful tropical fish. Something of the spirit of that benign + joyous nature is still palpable in some of the customs + dances we witnessed at the Polynesian Centre, commercialized as it is. —

The Centre consists of acres of an elaborately landscaped garden with canals dividing them into ^{ix}quasi-islands where six South Pacific islands display some of their traditional crafts + skills, community buildings + dresses: Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti, + Aotearoa (New Zealand). It was all very colorful + friendly as we moved from one culture to another, following various performances

that included a well tattooed Samoan chief who made + played with fire; a splendid pageantry on various rafts acting out some ancient legend involving the fire goddess Pele; complex drum rhythms played by Fijians, etc. I thought I detected some interesting differences between the islands (a more gentle air among the Tahitians as compared to the Fijians) but it was all too brief + tailored for tourist consumption to draw any, even tentative conclusion. One became aware that among these happy people warfare + killings were not unknown (Among the Fijians if you entered the chief's abode by the wrong door you were immediately clubbed to death, no questions asked!) etc. And there was always the threat of volcanic eruptions + hurricanes that needed from time to time wreak havoc among the islanders. Yet the overall impression of these cultures is one of a profound + serene spirituality, though I suspect their darker sides have been laundered out by obtuse + greedy promoters. These impressions were confirmed by a spectacular theatrical presentation at 8 pm in a large amphitheatre that most rent

between 2 + 3,000 people. All the islands participated, each giving excellent performances of group dances that included "O Ali'i No 'Oe", danced with split bamboo (puili) by men + women to tell how men enjoy being treated like kings (Hawaii); "Ngaalii Ongo 'O E Nafa" an acrobatic performance on drums (Tonga); "Titi Tonia", a stick dance involving very quick reflexes to teach us of life's constant surprises (New Zealand); "Rande", a fan dance expressing gratitude for the beauty of the land (Fiji); "O'e'a Amui", a joyous wedding celebration (Tahiti); "Fa'ataupati", an energetic + rhythmic slap dance by young men (Samoa); and at least a dozen more, ending in a sensuous display of fire + water (fountains) to round out a rich afternoon + evening. — Between the Spectacle ("Horizons") + the afternoon events, we had dinner — a "luau", a special native feast with various ceremonial introductions in colorful costumes, including the removal from an "underground oven" (actually a 2 ft deep, 4 ft square pit) of two pigs cooked on fire-heated lava stones (which retain heat for 12 hours + more) under layers of banana leaves. There was

fruit juice (no alcohol! Probably because it's all organized by mormons), salads, sweet potatoes, chicken, fish, + of course the cooked pig (shaved). It wasn't a gourmet meal, but there was lots of it (buffet-style) + it was made more enjoyable by songs + dances performed on stage in the large open hall where about 500 of us ate. The dinner started at 5:30 pm. At 7 pm, we left to see the Imax film: "The Living Sea". Marvellous photography, stunning views both of + in the sea, but the film remains too fragmentary. In a way, it makes us feel defeated by the immensity of the oceans, really a single body of water so vast that I came away with the conviction that however furiously we continue to contaminate this planet, the sea will not succumb + will regenerate itself after have done.

*

AIRPORT WAIKIKI EXPRESS
720 Iwilei Road, Suite 101
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

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TICKET SALES & REDEMPTION
One Way and Roundtrip tickets are sold on board by the driver. Unused portions may be redeemed by mailing to the address above. Return portion of ticket will be redeemed for \$5.00. Fares are \$8.00 one way and \$13.00 roundtrip. We cannot be responsible for lost tickets.

\$13.00 ROUNDTrip
566-7333
383783

The next day, Feb. 5, we took the Airport Waikiki Express to catch our flight with Mohalo ("Thank-you") Airlines at 11:45 am + we flew over that vast blue

ocean to Kauai — perhaps the most beautiful
+ the best tourist-ridden
of the islands. —



Tuesday, Feb. 11 / 8am / Island Valley Resort /
Mani

Yesterday we transferred from Kauai
here to Mani. It took the best part of
the day. We took a walk to the Spouting
Horn before we left, but the rest of the
morning was taken up packing. I re-
turned the car to Avis at the
Hilme airport at 11:45 am — with some
delay because they proposed to charge
\$2.69 a gallon to refill the tank + I
drove back 3 miles to Hilme where I
refilled it at \$1.59 a gallon! (Marvellous
as these islands are, all interaction with
visitors is commercialized, + those living
off them will use any deception or chicanery
to get an extra buck!). At 12:30 pm we flew

*

DATE 203
74 11304
TIME

UH

HAWAII'S SCENIC AIRLINE

MAHALO AIR
INC.

THANKFUL TO CALL HAWAII HOME



Views were
lots of clouds +
made flying a
carnival whole
up our Avis
clock be-
wysles convert-
our economy
in style — an
Would make
y. There were
ter the centre
e reached the
sky + the
we. We im-
sences between
more of a
gentle land-
to our studio

PASSENGER INFORMATION

RESERVATIONS

Oahu: (808) 833-5555

Neighbor Islands: 1-800-277-8333

U.S. Mainland & Canada: 1-800-4-MAHALO (1-800-462-4256)

Tokyo, Japan: 03-3597-9474

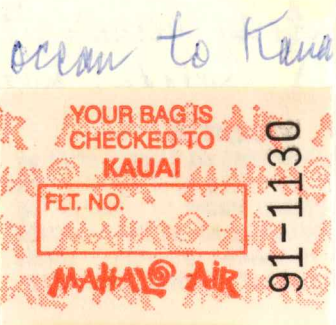
Photo identification is required for all passengers over the age of 18. Boarding may be denied and the ticket/coupon confiscated if the passenger's ID does not match the name on the ticket/coupon. Note: For security reasons, all checked and unchecked articles are subject to inspection, including x-rays.

CHECK-IN & BOARDING TIMES

Passengers are required to check in at the Mahalo ticket counter no later than 30 minutes prior to scheduled departure time. Reservations are subject to cancellation and passengers are not eligible for denied boarding compensation if they present themselves at the boarding gate less than 10 minutes before scheduled departure.

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One carry-on piece per passenger is permitted if it weighs no more than 5 lbs. and will fit in an area 18" x 11" x 8". Items such as medicines, keys, important papers and travel documents should be carried on board. Mahalo Air reserves the right to restrict carry-on luggage.



Tuesday, Feb. 11

Yesterday
here to Man
the day. We +
Hon before
morning. We
turned the
wheel around
delay. We
at 2:09 a full
down back.
refilled it as
as these isla
visitors is
off them with
to get an ext.

CHECKED BAGGAGE

Outside identification is required on all checked baggage. It is recommended that you also place your name and address inside your luggage as well. All checked luggage should be locked. Liability for checked baggage is limited to \$1,250 per passenger and excludes certain items. Do not place money, jewelry, electronic or camera equipment, or other expensive or non-replaceable items in checked baggage. Federal regulations require that firearms in checked luggage must be declared and unloaded. Free baggage allowance includes two bags per passenger not over 44 lbs. each and not exceeding 62" (L+W+H). Maximum weight per checked bag is 70 lbs. with maximum dimensions not exceeding 80". Excess charges are collected for additional/oversized/overweight pieces. Note: Suitboards in excess of 6'6" cannot be accepted. Mahalo shall not be liable for damage arising from normal wear and tear of baggage handling, including but not restricted to scratches, scuffs, punctures or marks.

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All lost, damaged, delayed or missing luggage/property must be reported to Mahalo Air within 24 hours of occurrence. Failure to do so may result in denial of your claim.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

Federal regulations restrict carriage on the aircraft of items classified as hazardous materials. These materials include, but are not limited to, flammable gases, liquids and solids, non-flammable compressed gas, explosives, poisons, corrosives, oxidizing materials, radioactive materials and magnetic materials.

with Mahalo to Honolulu where we changed
to another flight
(#414) at 2:05 pm
which took us to
Main in 28 mins:



trim prop on large wings. The views were
spectacular, though there were lots of clouds +
a fair bit of wind which made flying a
little rocky at times. But we arrived whole
& healthy. When I picked up our Athis
car, I must've charmed the clerk be-
cause she offered me a Chrysler convert-
ible for the same price as our economy
car & so we drove off in style - an
open red convertible that would make
Clara run green with envy. There were
heavy cloud formations over the centre
of the island, but when we reached the
west coast (on Hwy #30) the sky & the
ocean were as blue as ever. We im-
mediately noticed some differences between
K. + M. - more traffic, more of a
resort feeling, calmer seas + gentler land-
scapes. We picked up the key to our studio

in Lahaina (after having done some shopping for food at Safeways in Kalaniani prices in restaurants are so horrendous that I'd bankrupt us if we went eating out all the time. We rented a condo in Kanih + here in Maui so that we could prepare some simple meals for ourselves) + drove straight to Kahone. By 5³⁰pm, as the light was beginning to fade, we were installed in our new quarters - a room with a fantastic view Room # 707 with only Sand Beach, palm trees, the ocean + in the distance the island of Moolo-Kai! The facilities (despite the higher price at \$110 per night) are less generous than in our Condo (#105) in Kanih Shores, but we're on vacation + we have all we need. - It's time now to turn back + try to catch up on my notes about our stay in Kanih.

And so back to Wednesday, Feb. 5 - the day we flew at 12³⁰mm via Mahalo Air to Kanih. A smooth flight with splendid views, some of which I photographed. There was some confusion when we arrived

because "the white envelope" that was supposed to be waiting for us at Avis wasn't there. So we drove to "Kanih Shores", found the janitor who, in turn, called the Real Estate Co where someone authorized him to let us into our Condo where the key + everything else was waiting for us. We occupied condo #105 with ocean view, a 1 bedroom apartment with an extremely well appointed kitchen, large sitting room + balcony right by the side of a lovely lava-encrusted bay where giant turtles come joy-riding the waves every morning. There were a few houses on the promontory across from us, but we never saw anyone (except our neighbors occasionally). It was like having a private beach because there was enough of a strip of sand for us to sit + swim. After unpacking + settling in around 4pm, we drove up to Spouting Horn where a guy (local) called Doyle gave us some tips about what to see + where to eat reasonably. We watch the water spout from a block of lava, forced by the surf

through channels in the porous lava. It appears that a century ago the spout was more massive + the resulting sea water spray damaged the nearby sugar cane. So the Chinese workers were ordered to blow it up (according to Doyle, a couple of Chinese were killed in the event), + today's "Spouting Horn" - essentially a single eruption of sea water following a strong enough wave - is all that is left. We relaxed for the evening + turned in at around 10pm.

*

Wednesday, Feb. 12 - Kaneohe - Valley Isle Resort

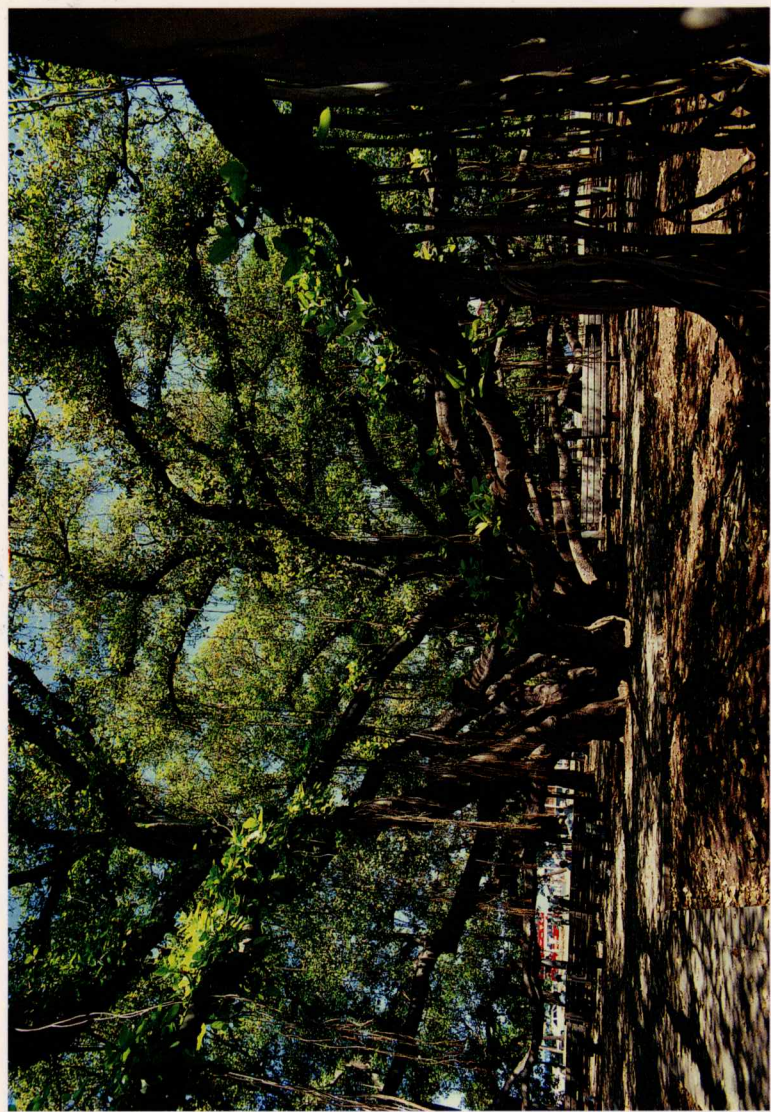
Yesterday, around 10am, we set out to drive around the northern shore of Maui. Our first stop was at Kapalua Beach, supposedly "the most beautiful beach in the U.S." Well, it's picture-postcard pretty, but not any more than dozens of beaches we've seen on Hawaii - + it has nothing on P. beach on Kauai. We swam at Kapalua, thoroughly enjoying the fresh silky water +

the beryllium waves. We continued on an increasingly winding road, stopping from time to time to admire (e. photograph) some breathtaking vistas, as to watch (near Hanalei) scores of surfers riding the waves - a marvellous sight that I'd take up were I a couple of decades younger - sharing such intimacy with the sea, becoming part of the force that moves it ceaselessly, what a spiritual thrill. Perhaps the whole experience something of this: as I'm waiting this in the gallery of our condo, I can see several groups of whales breaching ("That's the blow!") + breaching! The sea is calm this morning + we're seeing a lot more whales than we've ever seen before. One gets a sense that they're playing in the water, enjoying the feel + the movement, their intimacy with the ocean - having a whale of a time! - The landscape of this island seems to be very diverse. We passed through fields of pineapple plantations, tropical forests, + rocky areas with sparse vegetation so that I was reminded of Newfoundland or Scotland - but

for the temperatures. The road ceased to be a State Highway just past Hanakaham & became a narrow, often single-lane road that was quite hazardous & often created situations in which we (or those meeting us from the opposite direction) had to back up to find a widening in the road so that we could pass. We stopped to drink fresh coconut milk (& take the nut home to eat - \$3) & to buy a deliciously sweet pineapple (\$5) - large & juicy (we just ate $\frac{1}{4}$ of it for breakfast). The road was not only narrow but also extremely rocky so that our progress was slow, especially as we stopped frequently. It clouded over in the Kalia Kulua area where we stopped at the Smith's Tropical Garden & saw an exotic & magnificent blue flower for the first time: "a jade plant" - a rare plant indeed, which I think I saw in Singapore. - When we reached Hy 30 to turn South we found it blocked by police because of an accident. We were

re-routed to Hy 380, only to find it blocked by police because of an accident (in fact the cruisers over took us, blue lights flashing & sirens wailing, to direct the traffic). The result was a slow, often a bumper-to-bumper crawl, down through lots of traffic. We stopped in Lahaina, drove along Front Street past all the little stores, & paid a visit to the world's largest Banyan tree, a truly magnificent specimen (quite different from the one we saw & photographed in Santa Barbara, which was a single, mammoth trunk with branches spreading to create a huge umbrella of foliage) which in a mere 150 years had spread to take up the whole town square; its branches trace from into thick trunks at distances of about 20-40 ft from the main trunk wherever they touched ground - a unique family of trees. - We got back here at about 5:30 pm. I called Clara to give her our numbers here & to wish her well for her trip to Calgary on Thursday. But it's painful

to think of our Canadian winters in this
Paradise World! —



The Banyan Tree at Lahaina



The Banyan Tree



Shading more than two thirds of an acre, measuring nearly one-fourth of a mile in circumference and reaching upward to a height of 60 ft., the Banyan Tree (*ficus benghalensis*) has been a Lahaina landmark for more than 12 decades. The tree has spread over the area via aerial roots which, when they reach the ground, grow into thick trunks. The Lahaina Banyan Tree is the largest in the state of Hawaii.

The Banyan Tree was planted on April 24, 1873 by William Owen Smith, Sheriff of Lahaina to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Lahaina's first Protestant Christian Mission at Lahaina which was started at the request of Queen Keopuolani, the Queen Mother and sacred wife and widow of King Kamehameha the Great. The banyan tree is a member of the fig family and originally came from India.

The symmetrical shape of the Banyan Tree was created over many years by caring members of the community. Japanese gardeners would hang large pickle jars full of water under the aerial roots which they wanted to grow as trunks. As the roots grew down, the ropes around the jars would be lengthened. Other aerial roots would be trimmed off, thus controlling the shape and symmetry of the tree.

Every evening the Banyan Tree becomes the roosting place for most of the local mynah bird population. At sundown, the tree comes alive with the raucous tunes of these birds.

The roots of the Banyan Tree thrive on brackish water. Banyan Trees grow best at sea level and are not found at higher elevations. The fruit is globular, rose red, and about one-half inch in diameter.



to think of our Canadian winters in this
Paradisiacal World! —

Kuhio Shores

PARKING PASS

Room

Number

339

And now back
to Hukulo where
we parking permit
No was exactly the
same as our postal
box No back home.
Thursday, Feb. 6, 1977

The Banyan Tree at Lahaina

On our 2nd day on Kauai we decided to drive
up the Waimea Canyon. We figured it'd
be a trip of a couple of hours since it was
only 17 miles to Waimea + another 17 miles
from there to the top of the Canyon. It soon
became apparent that it'd take a lot longer.
To start with, there were so many splendid
beaches on the way to Waimea that we
stopped several times + had a swim on
a beach near Poakela Village. Then there were
speed limits, usually at 25 mph, and,
finally, the actual Canyon road was full of
twists + turns. But it was an exciting
2 because it was Mark Twain who called

Waimea Canyon the "Grand Canyon of Hawaii" and indeed these are places where it resembles the actual Grand Canyon in Arizona. But the comparison doesn't do Waimea justice because ^{new} it is less majestic, neither as deep nor as extensive as the G.C., + it is a geological infant. The Hawaiian islands were formed by volcanic action from the sea floor about 6 1/2 million years ago + took another 5 million years to reach its present shape (although the volcano on Hawaii itself still adds land to the island by repeated eruptions + a constant lava flow). The Waimea ^{canyon}, unlike the G.C., is not an open book of the evolution of life; there are no fossils in these islands. But the Waimea Canyons have their own characters: if occasionally the rains have washed parts of the slopes clear of vegetation + exposed the red-earth (iron oxidation?) in layers reminiscent of the G.C., most of the rifts are filled with tropical grass, bushes + trees, + exude an air of mystery, quite unique. They often developed into valleys

running straight into the sea + offer breath-taking vistas 4,000 ft down a green valley into the blue sea separated from the land by the stark form of a vigorous surf — such as we saw (+ I photographed) from Kalalan Lookout the Northern-most point of the Canyon road that offers a glimpse of the fabulous Na Pali coast, inaccessible by any other route (except for a hiker's ~~path~~ trail from Ke'e Beach) but by sea. The vistas on the road are too many to list, but the Puna Ka Pale Lookout is memorable for the most Grand-Canyon-like view it provides. We spent most of 6 hours on the Canyon trip + then descended to the Coast to drive to the Western-most point. At Mana (near a US submarine missile site) the highway ends + we drove another 7 or 8 miles on an awful dirt track full of potholes, but it was worth it because we came to the most magnificent beach we have ever seen: Polihale Beach — huge sand dunes in both directions, high waves breaking thru-

decisively, + no one else in sight! We stayed
there for an hour, but heeded the sign that
warned against swimming because of dangerous
surf, currents + a deadly undertow. Aletti
was ecstatic about Polihale; it has become
a beach mask for her which no other beach
so far has been able to even approximate.

*

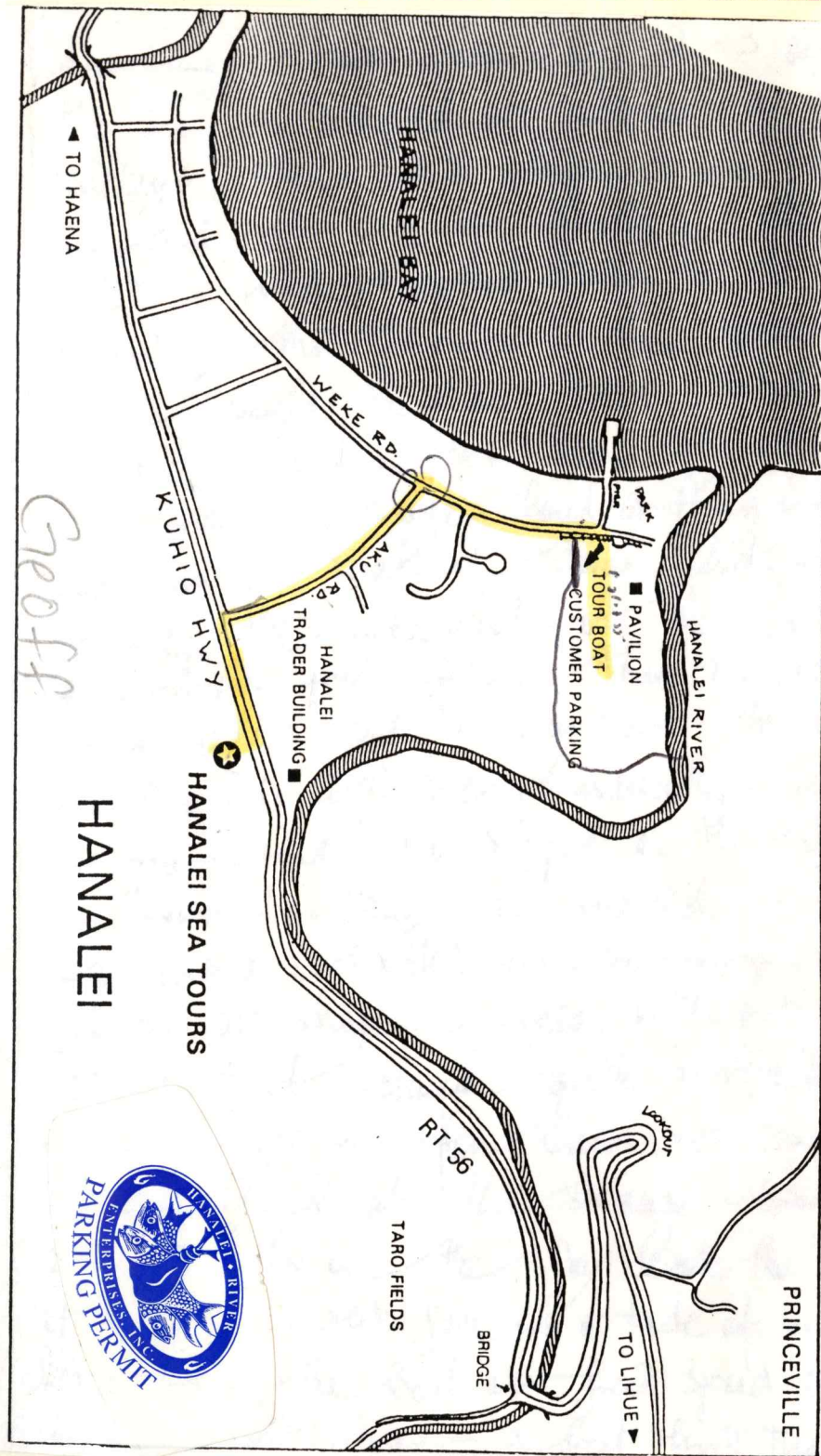
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Friday, Feb. 14 - Valentine's Day - 8³⁰ am - Maui

With an "Aloha au ia oe" ('I love you'
in Hawaiian) we began the day. I gave A.
a four jump surf + A. gave me a blue
silk sunnier shirt to celebrate the day
+ as a souvenir of our Hawaiian adventures
which come to an end tomorrow. We
also decided against another outing - a
drive to the Hanalei Volcano crater,
because it is almost certainly shrouded in
clouds + rain, because we're exhausted
from yesterday's trip to Hana, + because
we thought we'd spend at least one day
just relaxing, swimming, reading. Of course

I'm still catching up with my notes
on Kauai - so that's what I'm doing
now, sitting on the balcony looking out
on a calm sea where some again saw
groups of whales (it's impossible to tell
at this distance whether there are two,
three or more) are carolling: I see
fins flashing, tails splashing, occasional
breaching + much blowing. - Kauai,
Feb. 7: for our second day we booked
a 4 hour raft ride with "Hawaii Sea Tours".
We set out around 9 am so that we could
stop along the way which would take us
north along the east coast + then from
Kilauea west to the extreme western point
accessible by road. The drive was not very
inspiring till we got past Kapaa, an ugly
strip of shopping malls, at least along Hwy
#56. We enjoyed a number of scenic vistas
+ at Kilauea turned off to visit the light-
house which is across from an exciting bird
sanctuary on a steep rocky slope. A nicely
landscaped area with excellent views of the sea.

From there we drove west, but saw very little of the sea because much of the road is bordered by private property, many of them with somewhat ramshackle buildings, wooden structures, square & functional only. When we reached Haena State Park, we found ourselves suddenly in a luxuriant rain forest. We stopped at Kie Beach, an attractive but rocky cove that is the end of the line for cars. From there a hiking trail of 12 miles leads southward along the coast towards the Na Pali Cliffs. — One of the most fabulous sights on these islands, as we were soon to find out. A sprinkling of rain got us going back to Hanalei where, in any case, we were expected to report at 1 pm for our canoe. And we did indeed go out to sea in a rubber ^{dinghy} ~~dinghy~~, with two outboard motors — not the most comfortable way to travel since there was only small ^{couch} ~~couch~~ at the back that seated two (or three at a pinch). Alone + another woman; the rest of us half stood, half leaned against the rubber tube sides of the craft. But all — the sights we saw!! The Na Pali Cliffs are

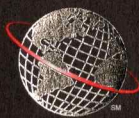


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stunning! Sheer green cliffs 2-3.000 ft into the sea, interrupted at intervals by deep valleys, often with high water falls, at the end of one of which (Kalalan look-out) we had looked down to the sea, not knowing that the view in the opposite direction would be even more breathtaking. The only cloud in the blue sky of our day was indeed a large cloud drifting overhead with us & making some shots impossible because the movement of the boat called for a higher speed exposure than my 100ASA film would allow. But, in any case, the images of the Na Pali cliffs are permanently engraved in my mind. We stopped on the way back in Lumahai Bay to snorkel, & I was both moved & excited by the many colorful fish in all shapes & sizes, with extraordinary designs, that seemed quite untroubled by my presence & often came up close to get a better look at this strange & clumsy creature. Also on the way back the Captain of the boat (Steve) gave us a taste of surfing by running the boat at great speed directly into 4 ft waves - a great thrill that got

our adrenaline pumping + made this the most exciting experience ^{of the trip} for Alette whose dream it is to ride the surf (as we witnessed at Lipaia point the day before yesterday). It was dark when we returned to house where A. prepared a quick spaghetti meal. By 9³⁰pm we were asleep + didn't get up till 6am. — ~~Saturday~~ ^{Feb. 8} at Kanai turned out to be a bit of a waste of time. A travel agent in Lanai (not far from our Kulihi



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Reservations
800.873.5353

Shores Condo) had suggested we enjoy a free breakfast at the Lanai Beach Resort in exchange for listening to a True Shoring Vacations presentation. No pressure, no need to purchase — and we were to get a \$75. reduction on a helicopter ride. Since A. wanted to treat me to a helicopter ride anyway, + we were curious to



Lanai Beach Resort — Aloha Guarantee

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You will be treated with the utmost respect at all times.

You will receive the gift you selected whether or not you purchase at Lanai Beach Resort.

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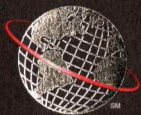
8:00AM & 10:00AM presentations will include tropical juices and gourmet island coffee accompanied by a muffin and a fruit plate.

12:00 presentation will include a fresh club-style sandwich, island salad, gourmet coffee and tropical juices.



of here after a near in Lanai about 1000. Fanned with live golfable enough — despite some pressure). Well, we'd at Lanai, + interest. But we were tempted: for (with dead), not anxious) 1-bedroom (ed) for one week a "free" week when exchangeable with around the world membership organization. I red additional in — and we turned poor nice about 4 all e decided we just 5 people decide where — and we were also \$460 (plus booking)

our adrenalin pump
most exciting experience
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Shores Condo) had
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a \$75. - reduction
since A. wanted
couples ride anyway



**"THIS IS A TIME SHARING SALES
PRESENTATION. ANY
PURCHASER HAS, UNDER THE
LAW, A SEVEN-DAY RIGHT OF
RESCISSION OF ANY TIME
SHARING SALES CONTRACT."**



hear about Time Sharing here after a near
disaster with such a plan in Comant about
20 years ago (the promoters vanished with
the money of those who were gullible enough
to invest; we were not - despite some
very unpleasant high pressure). Well, we
were not high-pressured at Hawaii, +
there was no unpleasantness. But we were
medium-pressured + we were tempted: for
about \$16,000 "ownership" (with deed), not
rental, of a (fairly luxurious) 1-bedroom
apartment (well appointed) for one week a
year (with an additional "free" week when
+ where available) + exchangeable with
3,000 such Condo resorts around the world
as part of a 2-million membership organiz-
ation called ~~Vacation~~ Resort C. I
We wavered + were offered additional in-
centives, but in the end we turned poor
Jo Ann ^{didn't} who'd been so nice about it all
+ showed us around. We decided we just
didn't want to have other people decide where
we were going to stay - and we were also
suspicious of the \$16,000 (plus brokers)

fees) annual upkeep payments which in fact amounts to more than we normally pay for a week's accommodation when travelling (without a Can. \$20,000 investment). But we were at the Lanai Resort till close to 2pm dithering, + decided it'd not been a prudent way to spend our vacation time. We went for a swim in the afternoon + relaxed by the beach. — Next day, Sunday, Feb. 9 — our last day, was our helicopter day. We had booked with Kanai Air for 12³⁰ pm. A group of giant turtles moved into our bay in the morning + seemed to frolic in the surf much as we did. We had a swim too before setting out for Milne airport. Our pilot was a tall, rather stiff + pedantic character called Weron. There were 6 passengers + he had already assigned the seating on a piece of paper, based on our weight. That was disappointing because I'd got to the gate first in hopes of sitting in the front, but A. + I were assigned seats 4 + 3 respectively, which meant that

got to sit by a window at last, along with the other two passengers. He placed earplugs over our heads which reduced the sound of the engines to a soft hum + through which the pilot talked to us as piped soft but solemn music (Hm. I would've loved some Bach or Beethoven instead!). The flight took us all around the island + to the side of the 5,000 ft Mount Waialeale, with over 400 inches of rain the wettest spot on earth! We flew into narrow canyons to observe a number of waterfalls + up some stunning bean valleys, along the sides of the Na Pali Cliffs. There were gorgeous vistas + unforgettable views, + I tried to take some pictures, though the curved plastic windows + the inside reflections on them make me wonder what will come of them. To my surprise I found the hour-long flight surprisingly unexciting: one felt absolutely safe, like sitting in a soft armchair + gliding smoothly across clouds. But it was worth the US\$200 it cost A. (who treated me to this dream fulfillment)

because of the stunning views we couldn't have enjoyed any other way. — In return I treated A to a splendid dinner at Jaylands in K (just outside Hialeah). We had to book early to be able to get seated + had a lovely table to ourselves in a garden setting that reminded us of English country inns. We started with a Hawaiian punch that was the most delicious punch we've ever drunk. It had alcoholic punch as well + raised our already heightened spirits further. We then shared an hors d'oeuvre of fresh shrimp (I ate most of them because A is not supposed to eat them) that were delectable. We decided to have some dry white wine (from California: "Hegne", excellent) with our fish entrees: Mahi Mahi (with an exquisite pineapple-mango sauce) for me + Ahi for A — both were most enjoyable dishes (though we agreed that Ahi is the better fish: I had it in Honolulu!). We completed the meal with a sumptuous banana pudding pie for A. +

a mixed pie for me (A's was better). We had a coupon for one free entree, but the bill still came to \$9.00. Life is not cheap here, especially us Canadians with a dollar worth less than 75¢ in the US. But we thought it was money well spent for a most delicious + satisfying meal + evening to round off our visit to Lanai, definitely our favorite Hawaiian island (of the 3 we know).

In the meantime, we've been out swimming + relaxing on a couple of nearby beaches + the one outside our studio too. I left my watch behind + that suggested to me: "A happy man does not consult his watch." But I'll consult the calendar. I've finished my Lanai notes now + it's time to move on to Maui + our activities on Wednesday + Thursday, Feb. 12 + 13. Well, we decided to go whaling on Wednesday at 11am. We opted for the "America II" because it was/is a sailing boat. There were only 7 of us on the boat: a family a 5 Argentinians (from Buenos Aires): a father, his 2 daughters +

their soon-to-be husbands, the future an-
engineers, the rest of Hawaiian students, one of
the daughters in engineering too, the others in
psychiatry) + us. The Captain + his mate
said they'd never seen such calm seas in
winter before, + the ocean was indeed
placid. Apparently the whales prefer more
agitated waters, but we saw several groups
of whales breaching + playing quite close up
+ a powerful, moving experience that re-
minded me of seeing for the first time
lions in the wild (in Kenya): it
brought tears to my eyes. The whales didn't
make quite the same impression because
we didn't come any closer than about
a hundred yards (I was only 20 ft away
from the lions!), because Hawaiian law,
we were told, forbids boats to go any
close. The "America II" is, of course, also
motorized + we moved by the propellers
until we came close to the island of
Hawaii, at which point the wind picked
up + we hoisted the sails. How marvelous
to move across the water by the natural
force that moves the water too. It was

a great adventure that lasted a couple of
hours + was well worth the US \$50. - we
paid (2 x .95 each). I was especially affected by
the whales to whom I feel a mysterious attrac-
tion. They seem to be gentle + intelligent
creatures. The Captain of the "America II" told
us that there are about 1200 whales be-
tween these islands + they are now raising
their young, teaching them their life
skills. That's what we were watching.
Amazing with what grace these large
 lumbering animals move in the ocean.
I've always been fascinated to know
by what twist of fate + circumstance
they were induced to return to the sea. I've
yet to see a convincing scientific account
of their Odyssey! — When we returned
a little after 1 pm; we walked along Front
Street + browsed in the little stores. Most of
what they sell is Ritzy + even in ABC +
E-Z stores expensive — garish Hawaiian shirts, "cheap"
jewellery, + other hick-a-bore. We moved the car +
parked in the "Liberty" Stores Complex, + there

found a fine blue jump suit which I got for A.
+ she found a blue silk shirt for me. We'd
already bought some T-shirts for the girls at
"Crazy Shirts" in Honolulu. Apart from that
we stopped only for food - after we decided
that eating out was simply too expensive -
not worth it. I prepared a hearty breakfast
with scrambled eggs + pineapple, we skip
lunch; + A. prepares a simply evening meal,
usually some delicious fish as a pasta dish.
That suits us fine → Honolulu Airport

Thursday, Feb. 13, we drove to Hana, a place recommended
because it was supposed to be
unchanged from the time it was
built, + A. was very keen on
seeing it. The drive was slow
on a narrow, winding road. There
were few vistas of the ocean,
but we passed through some
marvellous rain forest + past
numerous waterfalls. Unfortunately
the sky was overcast + we
passed through a number of rain
showers. There must be lots of
rain along that northeast coast.

Saturday, Feb. 15 -
12 noon. We're on
our way home
on CP flight 126,
leaving at 2:45 pm.
Couldn't get a better
connection + have
to spend 3 hours
waiting here. A.
is off to look at
the stores. I'm in
the little Chinese
garden, catching
up with my
notes. →

to account for the lushness forest with lots of
tall eucalyptus, Kona + Rinku trees as well as
some large, impressive mango trees. The forest
was the most impressive part of the trip, for
Hana itself was not very interesting - consisting
largely of square wooden buildings but with
splendid flower gardens. A couple of quaint
churches (RC/St. Mary's + Lutheran?) only serve
to remind me of the destruction Christianity brought
upon these, as upon so many other people in the
world. In its missionary activity alone Christian-
ity has been a terrible plague on mankind. —
We swam in Hana Bay, though I must say
we never found a really good swimming beach
anywhere in the Hawaiian islands. Oh, you
can swim everywhere - but it's not
because of shore break waves, lots of coral +
rocky ground, + rip-currents + undertows. A. stayed
close to the beach most of the time as a result,
+ even then she took a couple of nasty tumbles.)
usually swam further away from shore + enjoyed
the vigorous + unpredictable waves. - Well, this was
one of our happiest holidays (we've had many) -
So Aloha + Mahalo, Hawaii! — X

